

The Greek Revolution In Macedonia: Uprisings In Naousa And Veria In 1822.

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Abstract : The purpose of this paper is to reveal that apart from Southern Greece, mainly in the Peloponnese, revolutionary movements for the Greek independence took also place in the wider region of Macedonia, as early as the 16th century whilst these movements reached a peak at the end of the 18th century and the first decades of the 19th century.¹ Furthermore the aim is to present the siege and capture of Naoussa and the defeat of the Greek revolutionaries by the army of the Ottoman Empire.

Keywords: Greek Revolution, Naoussa, Ottoman Empire, Supression, Uprising, Veria.

I. Introduction

The most significant revolutionary movements that took place in Macedonia are thought to be those that bursted out in the area of Chalkidiki, Olympus and Vermion. In 1821 Emmanouel Pappas was the leader of the revolutionary movement in Chalkidiki. He was supported by the inhabitants of Kassandra, Polygyros and Mandemochorion whilst several monks of Mount Athos also assisted his effort. Nevertheless, this movement was supressed by the Ottomans, the area of Kassandra was destructed and finally Emmanouel Pappas took refuge in Hydra, where he continued his revolutionary action.²

Furthermore, Diamantis Olympios and Nikolaos Kasomoulis led the revolutionary movement in the area of Olympus. They also intended to take further action in Vermion. However the movement was suppressed at an early stage by Abu Lubut Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Thessaloniki.³

Finally, although prominent fighters such as Anastasios Karatasos, Theodosios Zafeirakis Aggelis Gatsos took zealous revolutionary action on Mount Vermio, close to Naoussa, the result of their effort was also unsuccessful.⁴

All the above uprisings did not have a positive outcome as they were suppressed by numerous Ottoman forces. Despite the unfavourable result, the Greeks in the following years continued to fight, in order to achieve their independence and establish a national Greek State.

II. Organising the Revolution in Naoussa

The decision and the preparations for the proclamation of the Revolution in Naoussa were taken at the monastery of Panagia Dovra. The monastery was the meeting point of Zafeirakis, Karatasos, Gatsos, the captains of Olympus, as well as other fighters from the wider region of Macedonia. They all decided that Naoussa should become the central basis of the revolutionaries.

¹ I. K. Βασδραβέλλης, *Οι Μακεδόνες εις τους υπέρ της ανεξαρτησίας αγώνας 1796-1832*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1950.

² Γιάννης Βασδραβέλλης, *Η Νάουσα κατά τον αγώνα της Ανεξαρτησίας*, Νάουσα, 1982, σ.σ. 21-23.

See also: Παντελεήμονος Καλπακίδη (Μητρ. Βεροίας), *Το μοναστήρι της Παναγίας Δοθρά. Ιστορία και θαύματα*, Βέροια, 2002, σ.σ. 32-33.

³ Γ. Βασδραβέλλης, *Η Νάουσα κατά τον αγώνα της Ανεξαρτησίας*, σ. 109.

⁴ Γ. Βασδραβέλλης, *Η Νάουσα κατά τον αγώνα της Ανεξαρτησίας*, σ.σ. 28-30.

The Revolution was proclaimed on Quadragesima Sunday, February 19 (March 3) 1822, in the church of Agios Dimitrios. There, after the mass, which all the fighters and the inhabitants of the city attended, the Protosyggelos of the Diocese of Veria and Naoussa, Gregory, blessed and encouraged both the assembled crowd and the fighters. Following Zafeirakis informed the attendees that the Ottomans demanded the surrender of Naousa. However in his speech he stressed out that all the area of Macedonia was ready and willing to enter the struggle for the Greek Independence. In the end, Protosyggelos Gregory carried out a special ecclesiastical ceremony blessing again all the fighters. Subsequently, Zafeirakis was proclaimed political leader of the revolution and appointed a four-member committee consisting of Protosyggelos Grigoris, Panagiotis Naoum, Ioannis Varvareskou and Zafeirios Georgiou, in order to assist his effort. At the same time, Karatasos was proclaimed general military leader and formed three large military corps, while all forces of Vermion came as well under his order.⁵

III. Trying to occupy Veria

One of the revolutionaries' primary goals was the occupation of Veria mainly for two reasons. On the one hand, due to the presence of the numerous Ottoman army in the city which could easily stop the evolution of the Greek movement, and on the other hand, because had the revolutionaries conquered Veria, they could also take control of the roads leading to Thessaloniki and Kozani due to the city's strategic position. At the same time, the revolutionaries believed that the occupation of Veria would ensure the protection of all other cities in Western Macedonia. The notables of Veria gave their consent to the operation and they also stated that, if a numerous body of revolutionaries entered the city, the people of Veria would also support them by taking up arms against the Ottomans.⁶

As already mentioned, the Monastery of Panagia Dovra became the revolutionaries' headquarters, due to its location near the city of Veria. Besides, the location of the monastery allowed also the fighters to hide and consequently to have freedom of movement in the area through secret passages.⁷ Therefore, the Greeks had occupied the Monastery immediately after the declaration of the revolution by Karatasos.

Following the necessary provisions, which included the fortification of the monastery, the construction of bastions and the installation of a guard on the surrounding hills, Karatasos ordered their forces to attack the city of Veria in the early morning of 21 February 1822. Four groups of revolutionaries with a total of 1800 men beset Veria. The initial successful attack gave way to the retreat of the revolutionaries under the pressure of a large Ottoman army, which had already arrived in the city the previous days. Not only this but there is also evidence that Karatasos' plans had been betrayed to the enemies.⁸

IV. The battle of Dovra

Following the failed attack in Veria, Karatasos together with 250 warriors went back to their fortifications at the monastery of Panagia Dovra. On 12 and 13 of March the Greeks successfully repelled the attack of a large Ottoman army. Nevertheless, on the second day of the attack, the Ottomans having reinforced their army, besieged part of the monastery and defeated Karatasos' men. At the same time, Zafeirakis' and Gatsos' armies immediately intervened in the battle taking by surprise the Ottomans and their leader Mehmet

⁵ Ν. Γ. Φιλιππίδης, *Η επανάστασις και η καταστροφή της Ναούσης*, Αθήνα 1881, σ.σ. 46-47. See also: Αντώνης Κολτσίδας, *Η επανάσταση και η καταστροφή της Νάουσας κατά το 1822*, Βέροια, 2010, σ. 71

⁶ Π. Καλπακίδης, *Το μοναστήρι της Παναγίας Δούρα*, σ. 34.

⁷ Π. Καλπακίδης, *Το μοναστήρι της Παναγίας Δούρα*, σ. 35.

⁸ Χιονίδης, *Η συμβολή*, σ. 6 και Καλπακίδης, δ.π., σ.σ. 35-36. A certain monk Seraphim is said to be responsible for the betrayal revealing the crypts where the revolutionaries had amassed a significant amount of weapons. In return, he was rewarded by Abu Lubut Pasha. See: Αντώνης Κολτσίδας, *Η επανάσταση και η καταστροφή της Νάουσας*, σ. 76 and I. K. Βασδραλέλλης, *Οι Μακεδόνες*, σ.σ. 122, 251.

Aga. The battle lasted several hours, the Greeks had taken the lead whilst the damage caused to the Ottomans was great.⁹

Nevertheless, late at night as Karatassos realised that it was difficult to defeat the numerous Ottoman army, alongside with Zografos and Gatsos decided to leave the monastery taking advantage of the fatigue of the adversaries. The united Greek forces sneaked out of the monastery in the dark and headed to Naousa aiming at preventing the Ottomans to attack the city. As soon as the Ottoman leader realized the evacuation of the monastery, ordered his army to invade the monastery, plunder and set it on fire. The abbot of the monastery Gerasimos did not manage to escape. The Ottomans abducted him and imprisoned him in Veria. There, a few days later, he was hanged in a plane tree at the centre of the city alongside with certain Greek notables on charges of participating in the revolutionary movement and supporting the revolutionaries' action.¹⁰

Next, the village of Vermio faced the wrath of the Ottoman army as well as the neighbouring village of Dovra, which was looted and set on fire, while its inhabitants were sold in the slave markets of Thessaloniki. Furthermore at that days, the villages of Katranitsa and Grammatiko were also set on fire whilst the monasteries of Panagia Kallipetra, of Timios Prodromos and Metamorphosis on the banks of river Aliakmonas were looted and set on fire as well.¹¹

V. The siege of Naoussa

The defeat of the Ottoman forces in the previous clashes infuriated their leader Abu Lubut Pasha, who personally led the campaign for the occupation of Naoussa having at his disposal twelve cannons and six thousand men, who, gradually were reinforced and eventually reached up to eighteen thousand soldiers.¹²

Prior to the attack, Abu Lubut had repeatedly issued orders urging the people of Naoussa to surrender their weapons in return of amnesty. However the people of Naoussa rejected these proposals and instead they occupied key positions around the city in order to prevent the enemy's attacks.

At the same time, a new firman was sent from the High Porte ordering Abu Lubut Pasha to assemble all available Ottoman forces in the area and campaign against Naoussa. The Pasha was instructed to occupy Naoussa, as well as to kill the revolutionaries, plunder the city and distribute the inhabitants' possessions among the Ottoman warriors.

This specific political decision of the High Porte demonstrates the Sultan's will to end immediately the revolution in Naoussa and the wider region. Furthermore, it is said that the Ottomans tried to give a vigorous end to the uprising so as the events not to be spread around Europe because the European public opinion had already demonstrated a fervour interest in the cause of the Greek War of Independence in the Peloponnese.¹³

The first attacks of the Ottomans were not fruitful. Initially the battles took place around Naoussa. Abu Lubut Pasha's army tried to approach the city walls without success. On the contrary the Ottoman army suffered heavy losses. Eventually, Abu Lubut Pasha, decided to implement a different strategic plan attacking the city simultaneously at several different positions. Nevertheless, the Greeks managed to defend themselves one more time. This unexpected development was quite offensive for the Ottomans and Abu Lubut Pasha ordered the reinforcement of his army. Next two additional cannons were transferred from Veria to Naoussa whilst human resources also arrived from the guards of Western and Northern Macedonia. New attacks and fierce battles

⁹ Κολτσίδας, *Η Επανάσταση*, σ.76-80. See also: Ευστάθιος Στουγιαννάκης, *Ιστορία της πόλεως Ναούσης, από της ιδρύσεως μέχρι της καταστροφής του 1822*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1993, σ.σ.148-153, Βασδραβέλης, *Η Νάουσα*, σ.σ. 31-32. See also: Γεώργιος Χιονίδης, *Η συμβολή της Βέροιας στην επανάσταση του 1821*, Βέροια, 1985, σ. 6.

¹⁰ Βασδραβέλης, *Οι Μακεδόνες*, σ. 122.

¹¹ Καλπακίδης, δ.π., σ.σ. 39-40, Βασδραβέλης, *Η Νάουσα*, δ.π., σ. 32, Χιονίδης, *Η συμβολή, 1821*, σ. 7, and Βασδραβέλης, *Οι Μακεδόνες*, σ. 147

¹² . Κολτσίδας, *Η επανάσταση*, σ. 84

¹³ Βασδραβέλης, *Οι Μακεδόνες*, σ. 125.

followed. Finally the Ottomans entered the city of Naoussa on 18 April 1822.¹⁴ The entry of the Ottomans in Naoussa marked the fall of the city. The army of Abu Lubut immediately indulged in massacres, robberies, looting, arson of properties and dishonour of the inhabitants. Many Christians were murdered in the temples of the city, where they had taken refuge to protect themselves.¹⁵ In total, more than 2,000 inhabitants were killed. Also, thirteen women from Naoussa together with their children fell into the waters of river Arapitsa trying to avoid disgrace by the Ottomans.¹⁶

The following days the Ottomans continued the same action against the Greek revolutionaries and the inhabitants of Naoussa. At about 400-500 inhabitants were imprisoned and then transferred to Veria. A few days later they were dispatched to Thessaloniki. The noble women of Naoussa were also amongst the prisoners, whilst many children from Naoussa were sold to the Muslim elite of Veria and some of them were converted to Islam.¹⁷

The European diplomats, communicated these deplorable developments to their administrative centres. For example the English ambassador in Istanbul Strangford, the consul of England in Thessaloniki, Fr. Charmaud and the consul of the Netherlands in Thessaloniki, M. Adam dispatched relevant reports to their government. A description of the events in Naoussa is also provided by the Frenchman Fr. Pouqueville.¹⁸

VI. Conclusion

Many Greek fighters who managed to escape fled to Southern Greece where they joined the Greek Revolution. At about 200 inhabitants of Naoussa a few years later returned back and tried to revive their city and their lives. Although the events in Macedonia were stressful, disappointing and discouraging, the Greeks continued resolutely fighting for the establishment of an Independent state in 1830.

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¹⁴ Βασδραβέλλης, *Oι Μακεδόνες*, σ.σ. 126-127.

¹⁵ Στουγιαννάκης, σ. 216 και Κολτσίδας, *Η επανάσταση*, ό.π., σ.σ. 118-119 και 148-149. See also: Βασδραβέλλης, *Oι Μακεδόνες*, σ.σ. 123-132, 149-151.

¹⁶ Κολτσίδας, *Η επανάσταση*, σ.σ. 104-106 και Βασδραβέλλης, *Oι Μακεδόνες*, σ. 130 και ο ίδιος, *Η Νάουσα*, ό.π., σ. 41.

¹⁷ Εμμανουήλ Ξυνάδας, «Οικονομικά στοιχεία από την επίσκεψη του Εμπού Λουμπούτ (Μεχμέτ Εμίν Πασά) στη Βέροια και των επακόλουθων εορτασμών», *Χρονικά Ιστορία και Πολιτισμού N. Ημαθίας*, τχ. 38 (Μάι-Αύγ. 2019), σ. 32.

¹⁸ Βλ. Κολτσίδας, *Η επανάσταση*, σ. 95 και σσ. 232-237.